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HOUSE, SENATE PASS GPO APPROPRIATIONS FOR FY 2000

Annual Funding Measure Includes Statutory Improvements

The House of Representatives and the Senate have passed H.R. 1905, the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act for 2000, which includes funding for the Government Printing Office. The measure includes improvements to the laws governing GPO.

Under Title I of the Act, Congress approved \$73,577,000 for GPO's Congressional Printing and Binding Appropriation, which is used to cover the costs of printing work that GPO performs for Congress, such as the Congressional Record, bills, reports, and hearings.

Under Title II, Congress approved \$29,986,000 for the Salaries and Expenses Appropriation of the Superintendent of Documents. This funding is used to cover the costs of distributing Government publications as required by law, including distribution to Federal depository libraries, cataloging and indexing Government documents, distributing Government publications to recipients designated by law, and distributing Government publications to other nations which agree to send copies of their official publications to the Library of Congress.

The two appropriations total \$103,563,000, or about 4.2 percent of the Legislative Branch Act overall, but represent a slight decrease from the level of \$103,729,000 that was approved for GPO for FY 1999. While the Congressional Printing and Binding Appropriation declined relative to FY 1999, the Salaries and Expenses Appropriations increased to cover mandatory cost increases for employee pay and supplies and materials.

The FY 2000 Legislative Branch Appropriations Act contains three statutory improvements for GPO's funding. GPO's traditional ceiling on full-time equivalent (FTE) employment now includes language authorizing the Public Printer to request a different staffing level subject to the approval of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. This gives the Public Printer the flexibility to work with Congress to increase the necessary resources if GPO's workload exceeds expectations.

The approved Act contains language increasing the limit on spending for travel under the Salaries and Expenses Appropriation. These funds cover travel by depository library inspectors to libraries around the Nation, by GPO staff to attend various library association conferences and meetings and to provide training in the use of **GPO Access**, and travel of members of the Depository Library Council to Council meetings to serve in an advisory capacity to the Public Printer.

The legislation also includes language increasing GPO's small purchase authority, which is set according to section 3709 of the Revised Statutes (under 41 U.S.C 5), from \$25,000 to \$100,000. GPO now has the same small purchase threshold for buying goods and services that is enjoyed by most other Federal agencies, which are using it to promote efficiency and economy in contracting and to avoid unnecessary burdens for both agencies and contractors.